



300 E. Joppa Road, Suite 1105  
Baltimore, Maryland 21286-3016  
410-821-2828 / TOLL FREE: 1-877-687-9004  
FAX: 410-321-3116  
INFO@GOCCP-STATE-MD.ORG  
WWW.GOCCP.MARYLAND.GOV

Martin O'Malley  
*Governor*

Anthony Brown  
*Lt. Governor*

Tammy Brown  
*Executive Director*

For Immediate Release:  
April 6, 2013

Contact: Bill Toohey  
Off: 410-821-2851  
Cell: 443-279-8661  
btoohey@goccp.state.md.us

## **Leading Victims' Rights Activist Vincent Roper has Died**

### **Funeral Details Announced**

The Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center has announced the death of Vincent Roper. Roper was for decades a major force in advancing victims' rights in Maryland. He died of natural causes early Thursday morning. He was taken to local hospital near his home in Prince George's County, where he was pronounced dead. Vincent Roper was 79 years old.

The names of Vincent Roper and his wife Roberta have become synonymous with victims rights in Maryland. For decades, the couple worked tirelessly on behalf of crime victims. The Ropers had been married more than 50 years and Vince died just hours after receiving a Governor's proclamation on April 3, crediting the couple's works. That date was also the anniversary of his daughter Stephanie's murder in 1982.

In paying tribute to Vincent Roper, Governor Martin O'Malley said, "Along with his wife Roberta, Vince Roper worked tirelessly to see that victims of crime were treated with dignity and respect, and given all the rights due under law. When the laws were proven to be inadequate, they worked to get old laws changed, or new laws passed. Countless Marylanders have benefitted from their dedicated service and thousands of lives are better because of their work. "

"The work of Vince and Roberta Roper has left an indelible mark on every aspect of the criminal justice system in Maryland," said Tammy Brown, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention, "influencing how victims are treated and serviced during and after the criminal justice process. Their compassion and commitment have had an impact on the lives of countless crime victims in the state, helping them through experiences that are often tragic and traumatic. For their service and dedication we are truly thankful."

Vincent was a 1956 graduate of the Naval Academy and served in the Navy for thirty years. But in 1982 his life and the life of his wife Roberta changed dramatically after the kidnapping, rape and murder of their daughter Stephanie, a Senior at Frostburg State.

At the time, the Roper family was excluded from observing the trial and was denied the right to present a victim impact statement at sentencing. This led to great frustration and anger on the part of the family, their friends and members of the community where they lived in Prince George's County. Spurred by this, the Ropers took on the cause of victims' rights, including the right of victims' families to address

the court before sentencing. They actively lobbied and advocated for rights and support services to crime victims and their survivors.

As part of this effort, in 1982 the couple, formed the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc. and Roberta served as its Executive Director for 20 years. Vince served as Treasurer. The agency is now known as the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. (MCVRC).

Ellen Alexander, Chair the Maryland State Board of Victim Services paid tribute to Vincent Roper in a statement issued Friday:

“Vince was a gentle, compassionate and giving man who along with Roberta, worked in the trenches for 32 years to ensure that every crime victim in Maryland would be granted the right: to be treated with dignity; to have a voice in the criminal justice process; receive restitution for their losses and expenses; and to have programs and services across the State that meet crime victims and their families' critical needs. His hard work; his devotion to both his immediate family and the multitude of extended victim families that he loved; his calm in the face of great challenges; and his and Roberta's many victories in ensuring their daughter's belief – ‘Everyone can make a difference and everyone should try’ will be a legacy for every crime victim who has yet to suffer a victimization. These ‘to come victims’ may never know that the rights they now have been bestowed or the programs that open their arms to them for support is a direct result of this most remarkable man. Maryland's crime victims have truly lost a hero today.”

The Ropers and the Center were instrumental in the passage of key victims’ rights legislation, including the Federal Crime Victims Rights Act and the Maryland Crime Victims Rights Act of 1997. MCVRC has long been an active presence in Annapolis working to introduce or support legislation to advance victims’ rights, and its web site provides this list of legislative progress in the state:

<http://www.mdcrimevictims.org/laws-and-policies/history-of-crime-victims-rights-in-maryland/>

###

*The MCVRC has announced that funeral arrangements will occur on Friday, April 12th; Visitation at 9:30-11:00, mass 11:00 am followed by burial and a repast. The services will be at the Saint Joseph's Center, 11704 Duley Station Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. In lieu of flowers, Roberta has requested donation to MCVRC or to the Stephanie Roper Scholarship at Frostburg in memory of Vince. Donations for either can be sent to MCVRC at 1001 Prince George's Blvd., Suite 750, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774.*